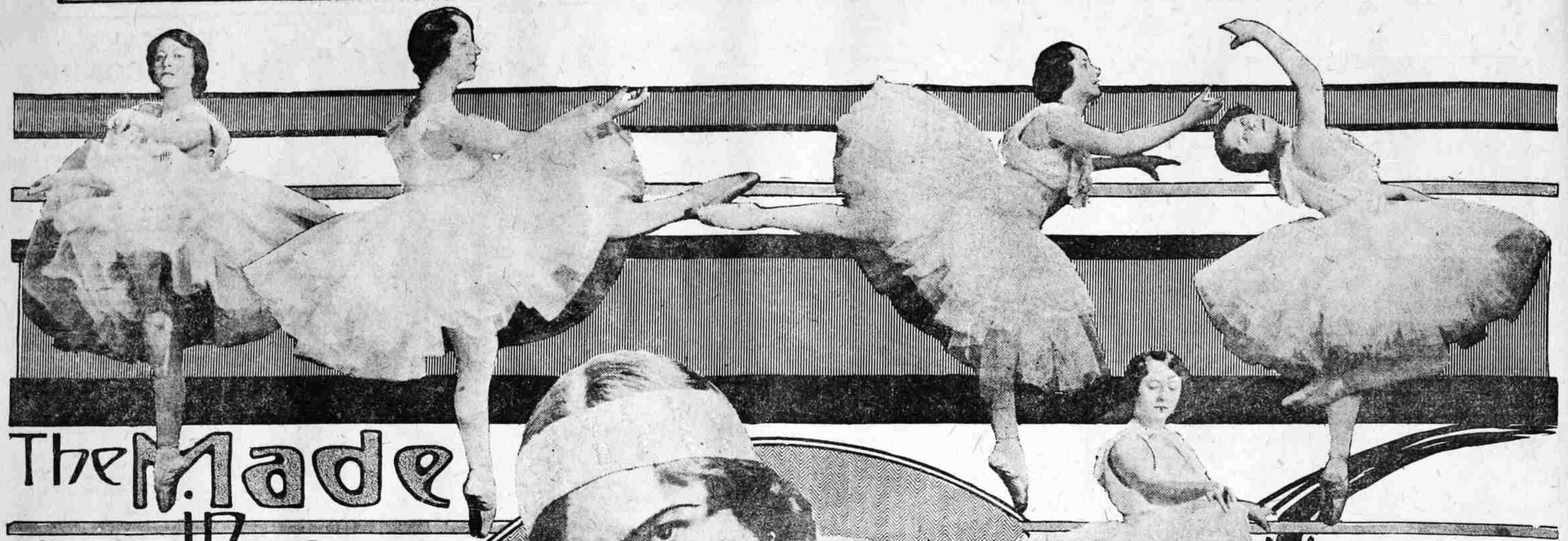


Magazine Feature Section



The Made in America Dancer

Will the nimble toes of the Made in America dancer kick over the pedestal of the imported coryphée?

Every year the art of the American ballet girl is becoming more brilliant and the American premieres are steadily growing in numbers until the toe dancer trained in the United States is likely to become as efficient as the artists who blossom out under the fostering care of the czar and the directors of the Russian imperial ballet schools.

Chicago has had its own opera ballet and will have again this season, and New York has a number of ballet schools for the training of young women who come from all parts of the country. The art of the ballet is still young on this side of the Atlantic, but the few teachers there are, such as Mme. Cavalazzi, Albertieri and others, are busily training the vigor of American girlhood into the artistic and lithesome grace and agility of the flaring skirted girl of the opera chorus.

More and more the eccentric gyration of the vaudeville and musical comedy stars is becoming modified into something approaching the artistic. Girls who might otherwise be toiling at some under-paid and unskilled task are finding a profession and a good salary in the ranks of the ballet.

Chicago's own opera chorus, which begins its practice for the season in October, will be recruited from the ranks of aspiring American girls probably to a great extent instead of from those bearing the imported label.

AMERICAN DANCERS RECOGNIZED.

American dancers as such have been enormously handicapped. They could not receive their training in this country because America has had until recently no ballet schools of her own. Now all that is changed.

And one of the best known of the Made in America toe dancers, Mlle. Dazie, declares that the American dancer is but now coming into her own.

"The Made in America dancer is just beginning to be recognized," said Mlle. Dazie. "Abroad they roster dancing carefully under government direction and the dancer is given every encouragement to become a great artist. In this country until a very few years ago we have overlooked the ballet. Now we are beginning to realize its greatness. Our ballet schools are turning out wonderful material. The American girl is intelligent, ambitious, graceful, animated, emotional. She has all the requirements and will blossom wonderfully if she is cultivated carefully."

"The craze for the Russian dancer woke America up. Until then the opera corps de ballet had to cross the Atlantic every season."

"Then Andreas Dippel and Signor Gatti-Cazazza came and the rise of the American ballet girl began. The Metropolitan School of Ballet Dancing was started to train dancers for the chorus of the Metropolitan Opera House. The tuition was free, with only one obligation. The girl when through her education was to sign a contract to dance in the Metropolitan ballet for the last three years of her training at a salary of \$15 a week for the first year, \$18 for the second and \$20 for the third."

"The American professional dancer, authorities say, should begin training when very young. Nine years old is not too early. For the first year the exercises are very simple, as too much exertion is not good for

the ballet pupil. It is not well to over-exercise, because it has a loosening effect on the joints and it is harder to control the muscles under these circumstances.

The professional ballet girl must never drink water while she is practicing. She may only chew a sponge or hold a little iced water in her mouth, but never swallow it.

For the would-be premiere there must be exercises—many of them—all practiced at the bar for many hours every day. The positions number five—all of which must be repeated with a bar. The battements and the ronde de jambe on the floor are the principal ones.

"Everything for strength," is the dancer's motto. The thighs must be immovable and the back absolutely reliable. There must be many months and many years of routine

before the ballet art has become perfected.

The ronde de jambe on the floor is but a prelude to a number of beautiful movements with the leg in the air. At the bar the toe of the moving foot is kept on the floor and swung back and forth in wide circles.

Another movement is the entrechat, the dancer jumping into the air

and touching her feet together while she changes them back and forth as rapidly as possible. The entrechat must be repeated often by the experienced dancer. Many of them do it easily half a dozen times, but they have acquired the mechanical part of it by the most diligent practice. The entrechat cannot be extended after the girl is 20, as the muscles after that age are too hardened to

train. Mlle. Dazie explained for the writer the fundamental exercises of the ballet girl.

"There is no rest for the toe dancer," she said. "One is never certain of one's art unless one is constantly in practice. Even a day's rest shows in the muscles. Pavlova and Gene are wonderful because they keep constantly in practice. America has its Claytons and its Adelais, but their numbers are going to be greater before many years."

"Hours of exercise and practice are required for the hips, the back and the muscles of the arms and legs. It is always well to have the bar close at hand even for the premiere, because it is much easier to perfect the steps with the aid of the

bar. The fundamental exercises are the same for the premiere or the inexperienced coryphée."

The correct position of the feet for toe dancing is with the soles facing each other. The dancer stands evenly on five toes.

One of the most famous of the American instructors of the would-be ballerina was Mme. Cavalazzi, who herself was famous during her

girlhood as a dancer and took charge of the Metropolitan School of Dancing in New York for four years. She was succeeded by Mme. Pauline Varhoeven. Signor Luigi Albertieri, ballet master of the Metropolitan Opera House for fourteen years, has made the work of the Century Opera ballet famous. He is one of the most remarkable of the teachers of the American ballet, who are growing more numerous every day.

The first and most important principle of the American ballet girl is balance. She must be able to execute any number of intricate steps while standing on the toes of one foot. The arms and the body must be gracefully managed, but the muscles of the leg on which the dancer is depending for support must never waver.

And the American dancer must be trained as the European is to make dancing the spontaneous expression of a personality. Her smile must not be forced. It must be as alive as her arms and legs.

All of these the American girl who would be a dancer must acquire.

